

Preliminary Amendment filed January 10, 2008
U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/593,347

IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12 and 13 have been amended and claim 9 has been canceled as follows:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): ~~A method for modifying gum arabic~~ A method for enhancing the emulsification ability of gum arabic comprising a step of making unheated gum arabic into an aqueous solution, and a step of maintaining the thus-obtained aqueous solution at below 60°C.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): The ~~method for modifying gum arabic according to~~ method according to claim 1, wherein the concentration of the aqueous gum arabic solution is not higher than 50 mass %.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The ~~method for modifying gum arabic according to~~ method according to claim 1, wherein the concentration of the aqueous gum arabic solution is 10 to 30 mass %.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The ~~method for modifying gum arabic according to~~ method according to claim 1, wherein the temperature at which the aqueous gum arabic solution is maintained is 5 to 40°C.

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Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The ~~method for modifying gum arabic according~~ method according to claim 1, wherein the time for which the aqueous solution is maintained at below 60°C is at least 6 hours.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The ~~method for modifying gum arabic according~~ method according to claim 1, wherein the pH of the aqueous solution is 4.5 to 6 and the time for which the aqueous solution is maintained at below 60°C is at least 3 hours.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The ~~method for modifying gum arabic according~~ method according to claim 1 which comprises a step of making unheated gum arabic into an aqueous solution under temperature conditions of below 60°C.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): The ~~method for modifying gum arabic according~~ method according to claim 7, wherein the temperature conditions are within the range of from 10 to 50°C.

Claim 9 (Canceled)

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): A modified gum arabic with its emulsification ability enhanced [[obtained]] by a method according of any one of claims 1 to 9 to claim 1.

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Claim 11 (Currently Amended): The modified gum arabic according to claim 10, wherein the unheated gum arabic belongs to the *Acacia senegal* species, and the modified gum arabic with its emulsification ability enhanced ~~obtained by the method set forth in claim 1~~ has a mass-average molecular weight of not less than 1.5 million.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): An emulsifier containing the modified gum arabic with its emulsification ability enhanced ~~obtained by the method according of any one of claims 1 to 9~~ to claim 1 as an active ingredient.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): A method for preparing an emulsion comprising the step of dispersing a hydrophobic material in a hydrophilic solvent or dispersing a hydrophilic material in a hydrophobic solvent, using the modified gum arabic with its emulsification ability enhanced ~~obtained by the method according of any one of claims 1 to 9~~ to claim 1 as an emulsifier.

Claim 14 (Original): The method for preparing an emulsion according to claim 13, wherein the emulsion is an O/W or W/O/W emulsion which contains, as a dispersoid, at least one hydrophobic substance selected from the group consisting of essential oils, oil-soluble flavors, oil-soluble colors, oil-soluble vitamins, polyunsaturated fatty acids, animal oils, vegetable oils, sucrose acetate isobutyrate, and medium-chain triglycerides.

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Claim 15 (Original): An emulsion prepared by the method according to claim 13.

Claim 16 (Original): The emulsion according to claim 15 which is an O/W or W/O/W emulsion which contains, as a dispersoid, at least one hydrophobic substance selected from the group consisting of essential oils, oil-soluble flavors, oil-soluble colors, oil-soluble vitamins, polyunsaturated fatty acids, animal oils, vegetable oils, sucrose acetate isobutyrate, and medium-chain triglycerides.